



Your Congressman Reports

Danny K. Davis

Representative in Congress

December 2006 – 7th Congressional District - Illinois

Save the Children

*“Who really cares to save a world in despair?
There’ll come a time, when the world won’t be singing.
Flowers won’t grow, bells won’t be ringing, who really cares?
Who’s willing to try to save a world that’s destined to die?
When I look at the world, it fills me with sorrow.
Little children today are really gonna suffer tomorrow.
O what a shame, such a bad way to live.
Let’s save the children!”*

*Al Cleveland/Marvin Gaye
Renaldo Benson*

As we come to the close of 2006, I take this opportunity to share some of my legislative and programmatic activities of the past six months. Much of the concentration has been on the needs of children – their care and education. Following the recommendations of my advisory committees and several town hall meetings, I have continued to advocate for additional resources to treat addiction and additional resources to plan, develop and implement drug prevention programs and strategies. I have been successful in generating earmarks for direct appropriations for local not-for-profits and faith-based organizations dealing with the needs of these individuals and groups.

Again following the recommendations of my child welfare and senior citizens advisory committees, I successfully championed several changes to the Older Americans Act which will help seniors to live more independently and enjoy a higher quality of life. Of great importance, this new law will enable the elderly and their families to manage their care and avoid spending down their assets in order to qualify for Medicaid coverage. Also it will expand access to financial support and encourage informational programs for grandparents raising grandchildren. The 7th Congressional District of Illinois has the highest percentage of children living in grandparent headed households in the nation.

To reach my office: 773-533-7520
www.house.gov/davis

As Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus Child Welfare Brain Trust I have worked actively at both the local and national levels to advance the causes of children, including encouraging states to adopt Kinship Navigator Programs. Currently, I am developing new legislation for the next Congress that will extend foster care benefits to children until they are twenty-one. This will assist in keeping children out of the system. This work has been recognized by such prestigious groups as the Children’s Advocacy Center, Prevent Child Abuse America, the Alliance for Children and Families, the Black Administrators in Social Work, Casey Family Services, Voices for Adoption, One Family, One Child and Sankofa, Safe Child Initiative. In addition, I was able to strengthen provisions in the law to reduce abuse and neglect as well as to promote more focus on the mental health needs of older Americans. I am very pleased that each of the changes for which I advocated were included in the bill when President Bush signed it into law in October.



Congressman Davis receiving award for his legislation on Adoption and Foster Care from Voices for Adoption. Presenting award: Renette Oklewicz (Freddie Mac Foundation). 11/13/2006

Education

Being a member of the Education and Workforce Committee provides me the opportunity to push hard on education issues in Headstart and other early childhood education programs, No Child Left Behind and the reauthorization of Higher Education Programs resulting in a number of successes in these area and promising even more success during the next two years. This year, my office had an outstanding group of interns and fellows who contributed to our work in this arena. I strongly advocated to increase education opportunities for minority students, prisoners and ex-offenders during debate on the Higher Education Act reauthorization. My study of minority male achievement in elementary school, high school and college was included in the bill that was passed in the House of Representatives.

I fought vigorously to create grants for Predominantly Black Institutions which are primarily two year institutions that serve a growing number of urban, low income Black students. In addition to two year schools, there are other colleges and universities like Chicago State which could be included. In Chicago alone, at least eight schools likely would qualify for grant monies to strengthen the capacity of these schools to attract, retain and graduate low-income students. Importantly, the Democratic Leadership incorporated my Predominantly Black Institution legislation into its higher education vision, meaning that this issue will be a key component of higher education reform this spring.

Our district, and indeed, the entire state of Illinois has felt the effects of No Child Left Behind. In August I, along with my colleague Congresswoman Judy Biggert (IL-13) headed a field hearing of the Subcommittee on Education Reform to examine the effects of No Child Left Behind on urban areas like metropolitan Chicago. We must make certain that reauthorization takes into account the disparities between schools and districts in order to implement effective strategies to educate all children. No Child Left Behind presents particular challenges to urban school districts due to their size, financial hardships and student diversity. This hearing was a meaningful step and I will continue to raise the needs of urban students and schools as we move forward. Reauthorization must also address other concerns residents have emphasized including lack of adequate funding, more equitable distribution of qualified teachers, ensuring students have up-to-date textbooks without regard to student income, and desire to focus on strategies that work rather than overemphasis on test scores.

The Subcommittee on Education Reform held a hearing on my “Education Begins at Home” legislation and it received many favorable comments. This is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would provide competitive grants for early home visiting. Home visiting refers to parent education and family support services provided to families within their homes. Early home visitation programs are a way to improve school readiness, well-being and health for children and families. Hopefully, this bill will move in the next Congress.

On the local front, my Education Advisory Committee continues to meet regularly and has a new chairperson: Ms. Luverta Hurt, a retired public school teacher and administrator. You are invited to call 773-533-7520 if you would like to become a member of the Education Advisory Committee. My office tries very hard to get young people more actively engaged in the public policy decision making process and young people are encouraged to call 773-533-7520 to join my Youth Development Advisory Task Force.

I visit schools, colleges and educational programs on a regular basis to discuss the importance of reading with children through several local and national programs to try and help motivate, stimulate and activate young people to read; and continue to meet bi-annually with school boards and superintendents in our districts to discuss educational programs, needs, problems and successes.



Congressman Davis and 2006 interns left to right: Richard Johnson (University of Buffalo), Kara Branch (Western Michigan University), Congressman Davis, Katrine Lazar (Wellesley), Enoch Bebel (Georgetown), Sangeeta Patel (University of Illinois - Chicago), Justin List (Loyola University), Dante Pope (Fisk University). Not pictured: Devon Dal Degan (Marquette University) and Lilliam Velazquez (Loyola).

Setting the Agenda for the 110th Congress: 2007 - 2008

7th Congressional District, Illinois

In our July-August issue I asked for your feedback in terms of where you stood on the issues. Many of you responded and this information is being used to help set our agenda for the next Congress. Many of your neighbors and friends said that we should:

- 1) Give priority to ending the war in Iraq
- 2) Preserve and protect Social Security
- 3) Work toward the creation of a more secure environment both at home and abroad
- 4) Increase the minimum wage to a livable wage level
- 5) Wage a serious war against hunger and poverty
- 6) Stop the genocide in Darfur and other places throughout the world
- 7) Develop and implement trade policies which create jobs and work opportunities in the USA, while protecting and promoting the rights and interests of workers throughout the world
- 8) Intensify efforts to de-escalate the presence of HIV/AIDS in the 7th Congressional District and the world.
- 9) Increase efforts to fully fund education and close the gaps between opportunities for pupils in different neighborhoods and communities
- 10) Make sure that Medicare and Medicaid funding is adequate to keep our hospitals and other health care institutions viable and expand critical biomedical research, including stem cells research
- 11) Continue the great work our district is doing on ex-offenders and prisoner re-entry
- 12) Try and find ways to make higher education affordable for more residents of our district and others like them throughout the country
- 13) Find, create and make more resources available for inner city redevelopment
- 14) Continue to work on the “State of the African American Male Initiative”
- 15) Find ways to stimulate the development of more affordable housing
- 16) Work to create capital for small business development, more micro loans and other innovative approaches to economic development
- 17) Make sure that veterans have access to health services and other benefits
- 18) Continue the great work we’re doing on child welfare issues
- 19) Continue our district’s leadership on drugs and substance abuse issues
- 20) Continue to hold forums, focus group meetings, public call-in broadcasts and townhall activities



Congressman Davis meeting with constituents from the American Diabetes Association regarding diabetes and stem cell research. Left to right: Rosemary Jaffe, Congressman Davis, Christine Beebe and Nancy Harris.

- 21) Continue to publish these great and very informative newsletters
- 22) Continue to work on environmental issues such as clean air, clean water, cleaning up brownfields, clean communities
- 23) Continue to work on redevelopment projects in North Lawndale
- 24) Put more emphasis on the needs of homeless youth
- 25) Work on making our elections more secure and more transparent

Ex-offenders Can Produce When Given a Chance

By the time you read this article, I hope that my Second Chance Bill will have become law and we will have more resources and more will to help ex-offenders. This photograph depicts a groundbreaking for 22 units of housing at Whipple and Madison put together by a man who was convicted of drug sales and went to prison, spent five years, turned his life around and is now a productive force in the community, creating jobs and economic development opportunities for others.



Congressman Davis congratulates Alderman Ed Smith (left) and Project owner/developer Melvin Bailey (right) at groundbreaking of the Male Development Project on previously City owned land. Also present and looking on Craig McClendon, Assistant to Governor Blagojevich, Alderman Walter Burnett and former Alderman Wallace Davis.

Congratulations to Melvin Bailey, President of the Community Male Development Project, kudos to Alderman Ed Smith for helping to make the city-owned land available and to Diamond Development Construction Company. Result: ex-offender develops 22 two flats, \$265,000 sale price – a great community redevelopment project!

World AIDS Day/One Stop Utility Assistance Day

On Friday, December 1, 2006 I held a very special Townhall throwing a spotlight on the global struggle against HIV/AIDS. This was an exciting, informative, entertaining and uplifting event. Along with knowledgeable speakers there was a Gospel Music Shoutout and free testing (Test Out!) for all those who wanted to be tested. The event was held from 6:00 p.m. till 9:00 p.m. at Malcolm X College, 1900 West Van Buren, Chicago, Illinois. Call my office at 773-533-7520 for more information about this now annual event.

On Saturday, December 2, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., I held a one stop utility assistance day Townhall at Crane High School, 2245 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago in conjunction with Peoples Gas, Com Ed, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and CEDA, the South Austin Coalition and Sankofa, Inc.. Four hundred and eighty-four residents came to get help with getting their lights and gas turned back on.

Danny D. Davis

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